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General Sir John French, in one of his dispatches, said:

"If any regiment deserves special mention, it is the Worcesters."

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Photo] [*Williams & Williams*

JOSEPH H. COX.
Private 7664, 4th Worcesters

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PRIVATE 7664

A FAITHFUL SOLDIER OF THE BRAVE WORCESTERS

BY

EDWARD SMITH, J.P.

AUTHOR OF

"MENDING MEN," "STUDIES OF MEN MENDED," ETC.

"FIRM"

LONDON

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY

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PREFACE

FROM June, 1905, to October 19, 1914, I have had as one of my correspondents a young soldier, late a private in the now famous Worcesters. My last letter to him, which was sent in answer to one written from the trenches, was returned in January, with the ominous word "Killed" written in pencil across the envelope. I wrote for particulars to the Infantry Record Officer, and, in reply, learned that Private J. H. Cox was killed in action at La Quenque Rue, on October 28, 1914.

The last letter he wrote me, dated October 19, 1914, exhibited such

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beautiful Christian fortitude and cheer, that one of the editors of the *British Weekly*, to whom I showed it, deemed it to be of sufficient general interest for publication. After re-reading the many letters from this soldier, which I have preserved, I venture to think a selection from them will be of interest and profit to many. The testimony of these letters to the wonderful power and influence of a redeemed life—a life which showed courageous devotion to Christ and His service in an atmosphere not always congenial to a professing Christian—cannot fail to prove a blessing. The letters will encourage other young soldiers in the great fight of faith against ungodliness and sin. They will, moreover, prove to Christian workers at home that a valuable

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ministry can be rendered to lonely hearts abroad, by brotherly correspondence; and also that the posting of religious literature supplies the recipient with weapons and ammunition with which to attack some stronghold of Satan, or to pass on to some other Christian friend.

Just now, when the military and naval authorities are waking up to the deleterious effects of alcohol on the efficiency and character of soldiers and civilians, the evidence this young fellow provides will strengthen the demand for further restriction. The late Prince Arthur, thirty years ago, remarked that strong drink was the only enemy England had to fear. My hope is, that among the many beneficial results of this otherwise

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disastrous war, there may be a curtailment everywhere of the facilities for obtaining alcoholic beverages; and also that the teaching in schools of the insidious nature of this poison may be made universally obligatory.

These letters are full of life and incident, from the record of youthful escapades and waywardness, to the experiences of a soldier's life in the Barbados, in Malta, Egypt, and India; and then of his three years' civilian life in South Wales, before he was called to rejoin his regiment for the Expeditionary Force to France.

Thanks are due to my friend, the Rev. Walter Lee, of Malvern, for correcting the manuscript for the printer.

E. S.

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PRIVATE 7664

A FAITHFUL SOLDIER OF THE BRAVE WORCESTERS

THE following letter introduces the earlier life of the subject of this sketch :—

"Newport, Mon.,
"Feb. 4, 1914.

"DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIEND,—

"I have been reading your book, *Studies of Men Mended*, with great interest. In a great many ways it has recalled to my mind much of my past life.

"I was born at Kidderminster in the year 1882. At the age of eight

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I ran away from home, but I only got as far as Stourport—three miles. I was brought back on a miller's dray. When I got back to Kidderminster I was afraid to go home, on account of getting a good thrashing; so I started walking about again, when suddenly I felt a hand on my collar. I thought it was a policeman, but to my horror it was my father, who had been searching for me. So when I got home, I had a good thrashing; but that did not cure me.

"I started afterwards playing truant, and for nearly three years I evaded the School Board officer. In the meantime, I went about with other boys for walks along the canal footpath, and on the Kidderminster Golf Links served as a caddie. My

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father was summoned again and again for my absence from school. I was captured when least I expected it, and spent a night in the cell with another boy. On the next day they told me I was going a long journey. About nine o'clock, my mother came to bid me good-bye, and asked me to be a good lad, and write home. At midday the other lad and I were taken to the railway station, under the charge of the chief superintendent. He told us not to try to run away, as we should soon be caught. We promised to be good lads. I was glad to get into the train, and we were conveyed to the certified Industrial School at Gem Street, Harborne.

"Here my career practically started. I was inside those walls, and knew I

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had to make the best of a bad job. On arrival at the school, we were taken to the baths, had a nice hot bath, and then given a change of clothes. How different it seemed, when we put on those corduroys, to what we had been used to! During the afternoon one of the masters took us all over the school, and told us it was kept like a new pin by the boys themselves. Of course, we did not do anything that day, but looked on so as to get some idea of the work. Then we had tea, and went to the schoolroom for indoor games, etc. At evening prayers I laughed, for which I had a good thrashing, — rather a bad start. Then all went down to the dormitories.

"Sunday morning réveille sounded

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at six o'clock, when we all had to go up to the lavatories and wash, and then start work; bed-making, and scrubbing the dormitory steps, passages, etc., which we had to finish by eight o'clock, except the school steps and dining-hall. Then we had prayers. The school steps had to be done after breakfast. Then to church, and to read books till dinner-time. After dinner we all went for a long walk into the country; then back to tea, and then to church; supper, prayers, and to bed; and so finished my first full day.

"After dinner each day—Sundays excepted—we had drill, which you will see proved an advantage to me. I have given you details of Sunday; it will be easy to see how the week was

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spent. On Wednesdays, we had half-holidays, and went into the country for outdoor games.

"Now, when a boy has been there some time, he is sent out to the factories to work, and that gives him more freedom and facilities for getting about, providing he has behaved himself. I was sent to work at the Mint, and started as a metal-roller's assistant.

"One Sunday evening, at church, I went out of the schoolroom without permission. The Governor came and asked me what I was doing. I told him the assistant-master had given me permission, as I felt unwell. That was not true. I was asked again, but I stuck to it, and received six strokes of a big cane. Still sticking to it, I had six more; then I had the

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birch; but as I still stuck to it, I was stopped going to work, and had to scrub the schoolroom steps every morning for the remainder of my school days. The time at last came when I had to leave, which was in the year 1898. Thus five years had passed, and I had not found Jesus.

"Back again to civil life. When I came home, I had to start work. The School Board officer got me a post with a baker. I had little chance of learning that trade, being sent about delivering bread most of the time; so I gave it up. Then I began work as a creeler, at Messrs. Brintons'. While working there some person persuaded me to go to the Kidderminster Early Morning Adult School; but I told him I did not see any good in it.

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However, I went, and that first morning I found you were the speaker. I decided to come regularly. After a while I joined the local battery of the Artillery Volunteers. Then, I am sorry to say, I gave way to drink, and stopped attending the school for some time. I was visited, and persuaded to go again. So I went again, and also joined the Bible Class at the Baptist church. Seeing an advertisement for a footman, I failed to get it after applying. I then thought I was a failure, and went and joined His Majesty's Army. That was the ending of my four years' civil life.

"It was not long before we left England, and so I got rid of some of my old associates, and made new friends On June 30, 1902, at

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Tipperary, I went into one of Miss Sandes' Soldiers' Homes, and there gave myself to the Lord; and from that day I have been used of God in winning others for him.

"Yours, in Christ's keeping,

"JOSEPH H. COX."

Private J. H. Cox's first letter to me came from Barbados. It was written on the regimental paper of the 4th Worcestershires, and dated June 3, 1905. In this letter, he tells me how hard it was to live the Christian life, and to refuse to drink with the other men. In my reply, I endeavoured to cheer him. I pointed out that the vocation of a soldier was to be strong and true, and that resistance to evil would enrich him, for we were

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told, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." That crown, I added, was not a future reward, but one that would distinguish the overcomer here. As I failed to recognize Cox by his name, I enquired why he should write to me? In his reply, which came per return mail, he regretted that he had not written me before. The following is an extract:—

"I am still teetotal, and hope always to keep so, although I have to put up with a lot of insults from the men who drink, and likewise because I will not lend them money to get drink with."

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He also explained why he had written me. The last day he was in Kidderminster, before sailing, was an "open" Sunday at the Kidderminster Adult School, and I was the invited speaker. This happened on the first and last days on which he attended. By being thus directed to me from across the seas, I felt I was called to be his helper. The magazines and tracts I had sent to Barbados, were earnestly read by him, and then handed on to the local Y.M.C.A.

The next letter, dated December 19, 1905, describes the journey of the battalion from Barbados to Malta :—

"I am very pleased to tell you that, after sailing on the sea for twenty

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days, we arrived at our new barracks at Malta on December 2, [1905]. We had some excellent weather. We left Barbados on November 18, and arrived at Malta on December 2, 4308 miles, or an average of 215¼ miles each day.

"We passed the Island of Madeira and the Rock of Gibraltar, which is called the Key to the Mediterranean. It is under a very large fort.

"I enjoyed the voyage as much as a holiday, for we had different kinds of sport, such as boxing, skipping, and tug-of-war, which made the voyage very pleasant. The band of the Hampshire Regiment played us to our barracks.

"I am very sorry I have not found any Y.M.C.A. rooms yet in Malta,

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but there is a Soldiers' Rest. I go to this Rest very often. They have prayer meetings and singing three or four times a week. I have chosen my text for the ensuing year. It is as follows: 'Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever partaketh [1] thereof is not wise.' I like this text; it makes me think of the great missioner, Gipsy Smith, as he was at Kidderminster a few years ago. He spoke on that verse when I held the pledge cards at the door.

"Wishing you a Happy Xmas and a Bright New Year,

"Yours sincerely,

"Pte. JOSEPH H. COX."

[1] Cox always said "partaketh" instead of "deceived thereby" according to the text, Prov. xx. 1.

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Private Joseph Cox writes, under date March 17, 1906 :—

"We have been under canvas the last three months. We have been to the following places for camp: Pembroke, Millita, Gudia, and Ghain. During the last six nights we have had night attacks, two or three companies holding a hill which is very rocky; the other five companies form the attacking party. It is very difficult to climb at night-time; we need to be very careful, for the least slip in climbing we may fall down perhaps a hundred feet or so.

"You see, while under canvas, it is very difficult to attend any of the Good Templar meetings. Besides belonging to the I.O.G.T., I belong

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to the Guild of Holy Standard. I think it will soon change its name, when I think it will become more popular.

"If you would like me to send you some views of Malta, please let me know.

"Yours truly."

It will be remembered by many that in the spring of 1906 there was a dispute with the Sultan of Turkey, because he refused to evacuate certain disputed ports on the Turco-Egyptian frontier, in the Sinai Peninsula. The British Ambassador presented a note demanding evacuation; and to show we were in earnest, a small contingent of troops was despatched to make a demonstration. However, the Sultan gave way on May 14, 1906.

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Joseph Cox writes, on May 15 :—

"We set sail for Egypt on the 8th inst., and arrived here on the 11th, to hold ourselves in readiness for active service. Our battalion landed at Alexandria, and marched to camp. We got settled down very late next day, owing to having to unload baggage. I am very pleased to tell you that the Sultan has given in, according to the latest telegrams. Our fleet, though ready for action, has had the pleasure of not firing, which I think is a very good thing, for had not the Sultan given in, there would have been a lot of bloodshed.

"Before leaving Malta, I attended the mission conducted by the Rev. Barrett Wilson. It was a great

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success. He is a fine speaker. I should have liked to have stayed longer, but we had to leave at a moment's notice. But during the period, I learnt much. He showed us there was no book like the Bible for reading. I have been much interested in Daniel, in the life of Samuel, in St. Paul's mission to Antioch, and in many other subjects, for which I am most grateful."

The Drink Evil

Cox pictures the vices of drinking and drunkenness in dark colours. Some may think there is exaggeration in what he says. Still, one can understand a young total abstainer, conscious of the fuller life and vision which freedom from the drug alcohol

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has given him, feeling shocked, as he witnesses the deterioration and destruction of the mind and soul faculties of his comrades, through this insidious poison.

The Worcesters have always held a reputation for courage and bravery, and experience shows that men of such qualities are specially susceptible to the allurements of alcohol. The man of forceful temperament, and who craves for the fuller life, needs ever to be on his guard. The man who enjoys fellowship, and whose heart throbs with emotion, generally finds in the convivial glass a stimulant which, in his utter ignorance of its subtle nature, he imagines a blessing. Oh! what need there is for teaching!

Many of the Worcesters are recruited

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from the populous industrial districts where heavy drinking, induced by arduous and exhausting labour in iron works and collieries, has been habitual for generations, and consequently the public-houses in these areas are proportionally twice as many to the population, and much closer together, than the average for the whole of England.

For forty-seven years I have had an intimate knowledge of the characteristics of these working people. A more generous-hearted, brave, and faithful type it would be difficult to find. The endeavour to save these qualities from the demoralizing influence of alcohol, and to make known the saving power of Jesus Christ, brings rich reward.

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Since Joseph Cox wrote in 1906, things have greatly improved abroad, as the letters from India reveal, though there is still much to be done. In the spring of 1914 I was in Natal, and there met the first South Staffords, who are recruited from the same type of county in England as are the Worcesters. The Colonel informed me that, of the 840 who formed the battalion, 400 were total abstainers.

In the concluding part of his letter of May 15, Cox says—

"As I passed through the city of Alexandria, I caught sight of a Soldiers' Institute. At my very first opportunity I called and reported myself, taking some of your tracts on the drink question. I was heartily welcomed, and congratulated on being

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a total abstainer. The lady in charge told me, that during the time she had been there, she had been shocked at the drunkenness; it was an intolerable curse to the country. How true is my motto text, 'Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever *partaketh thereof* is not wise'! When I want anything to drink, I take an orange, and squeeze the juice into a cup or basin, whichever I can get, and quench my thirst."

The next letter has more to say on the subject of drunkenness:—

"June 3, 1906.

"DEAR SIR,

"I am very grateful to you for your kind and welcome letter, also for the pamphlets, magazines, and book. I am very sorry to tell

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you that the battalion is one of the worst in the British Army for its drunkenness. During the few months we were at Malta we had at least 75 per cent. tried for drunkenness, which is a very bad record; and now we have come to Egypt, it is nearly the same. The money taken for that cursed drink in the regiment canteen alone would pay five companies out of eight. Imagine the cost of the drink in the British Army, if it would pay five companies each month in only one battalion! Then again, men try to borrow money from one pay-day to another, and are always in a state of debt.

"I am very pleased to tell you that, during the month of May, I got two of the biggest drunkards to join the

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Independent Order of Good Templars. I took them, on three months' probation, in the Blue Caps Pride Lodge, No. 107, of which I am deputy-marshal. As they have attended each meeting, and are money in their pocket, I think they will remain firm. I have given to them and others a pamphlet on the drink question, and distinctly told each to pass it on to some one else when he had finished with it. I sincerely hope, before the end of the present month, I shall have some more men to propose for the I.O.G.T. and the Royal Army Temperance Association. I am getting more acquainted with the work of a Christian, but I have yet a lot to learn of Christ and His work.

"I am now a member of the

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Y.M.C.A., the Guild of Holy Standard Bearers, and the two temperance societies, so you see I am rather busy.

"'Who is on the Lord's side?' is a splendid question; then to give the answer, 'I am.' It is very difficult, if a man dare to mean what he says. I remember when Gipsy Smith was at Kidderminster a few years ago, he sang that hymn, and many persons were converted that night. It is surprising what the Lord can do. I have been reading *Pilgrim's Progress*. How much there is in it of the blessed Psalms and other parts of Scripture! In fact, it seems completely composed from the Bible.

"Yours sincerely,

"Pte. J. H. Cox, H: Company.

"Mustapha Camp, Alexandria, Egypt."

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"June 25, 1906.

"SIR,

"We having moved from Alexandria to Gozo, on detachment, there is only my company. We are away from the remainder of my battalion, but we are doing some very good work amongst ourselves. A sergeant and I have taken a room in the barracks, in which the officer has allowed us to hold our meetings. We would like some text-cards to hang up, as pictures are very scarce. I am pleased to tell you, I have just received the Soldiers' Christian Association Card, with daily portions of Scripture. The portion for to-day is Num. xxiii. 16–30. I have chosen the 19th verse for the Golden Text. (We are asked to pick out the one we think

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best.) 'God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent. Hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?'

"We are not able to get the blackboard card, as, being on an island near to Malta, it is very difficult to manage. We are just beginning this branch. It will be some time before we get it reorganized. We hope and trust we shall get enough men to be members. I am sorry that the majority of our men go to that ruinous place, the canteen; it injures, not only their body, but their soul. See Rom. viii. verse 35 (another question): 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation,

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or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?' Answer, 'None.'

"I remain,

"Yours truly."

The Light of the World

The next letter is very full. It opens with expressions of gratitude for the temperance ammunition I had sent him, and for the pleasure he had had in learning that I had spoken again at his old school, and had read to them one of his letters. He proceeds:—

"On Saturday, August 4, I represented the Gozo Branch of the Soldiers' Christian Association at its monthly meeting. I spoke of the

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progress of our small branch at Gozo, in which I am so deeply interested. The subject for the evening was the 9th chapter of St. John, from the 18th verse—Jesus healing the blind man. What a blessing it is to be able to say, 'Once I was blind, but now I can see'; yes, see the true and living Light, the Light of Jesus! Oh, how often I think of that wondrous hymn—

'The whole world was lost in the darkness of sin,
The Light of the World is Jesus;
Like sunshine at noonday His glory shone in,
The Light of the World is Jesus.

Come to the Light! 'Tis shining for thee;
Sweetly the Light has dawned upon me;
Once I was blind, but now I can see;
The Light of the World is Jesus.'

"Whenever that is sung, how many go away with tears in their eyes when

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they hear that the Light of the World is Jesus; He Who came to take away our darkness, and to give us His light! We do want it more and more in the Army and Navy, for there are hundreds of men in both services who are ignorant of the fact that Christ did come into the world to save sinners, and that HE is the Light of the World.

"I have been chosen to speak during the present week. I shall speak from the text I have given you before, 'Wine is a mocker.' I have obtained a few days' leave of absence from camp. I am going on board one or two of the vessels in the harbour, to see if I can get into conversation with some of the worst men, and try if I can help them to lead a better life than that of a dog's life. I must

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confess I do not know my Bible as I ought to, but I sincerely trust I may know it more and more, until I can say, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.'

"I remain,
"Your loving brother in Christ,
"JOSEPH H. COX,
"H Company.

"Malta or elsewhere."

THE VALUE OF CHRISTIAN CORRESPONDENCE AND FELLOWSHIP

There is no doubt that by correspondence, our young soldiers and sailors can learn much. The wonderful work which Miss Robinson and Miss Weston have accomplished in

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this direction, amongst soldiers and sailors, furnishes abundant evidence. I was anxious to know if Cox had any difficulty in reading my writing. He replied, to my entire satisfaction, as follows:—

"I can read your letters quite easily, for I am going in for the first class of education. I have to study manuscript, so that I may be able to read any kind of writing; and I have to write in two or three different ways. Why I am striving for this first certificate is, to help me in civil life; for a man who is educated, is sure of getting employment when he has finished his eight years."

Christian fellowship everywhere is an education, as Cox found out:—

"I went on board the *Venerable*,

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just after she came into harbour. I had a good chat with three men on board H.M.S. *Minerva,* and they seemed good fellows; but they were all being paid off this month. I shall probably not see them for years to come."

In another letter Cox records:—

A Drink Tragedy

"On Friday morning, at 6.30, we had the misfortune to find one of our fellow-soldiers at the bottom of a cliff, with his neck broken. He had come over with the Company to Gozo for a day's outing. I will give you the evidence as it was reported in the papers—

"'It appears the deceased had been drinking considerably the day before.

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He was seen to leave the canteen at closing time, 9.30 p.m., when he must have gone to sleep on a very slanting wall, and rolled over the bastions of the fort, a distance of forty or fifty feet downwards, and caught himself on some hard substance and broken his neck.'

"The Maltese jurymen were trying for a long time to think what he died from, so they had a post-mortem examination. We buried him with military honours at 7.30 p.m. on Saturday. One of the men asked me what I thought he died of. I said, in a whisper, 'Through drink.' I then gave him Prov. xx. 1, 'Wine is a mocker.'

"How many cases we have in the Army! how many men go to prison

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every week! how many homes are wrecked, through the cursed poison! Hundreds of thousands! It is the root of all evil. Just look at what soldiers pay in the Army in one day alone; look at the fines, from 4*s.* to 20*s.*, enough to build palaces; and then they wonder where their pay goes to, and they start borrowing from one pay-day to another, and are always in debt. I say again and again, in the barrack-room, to those who take it, 'Leave it alone,' as they are all in danger, every time they touch it, of coming under its influence.

"I am pleased to tell you that one of the men of our little band, who went back into the paths of sin, has returned. We prayed earnestly that he should

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not have peace until he found the right way, and thank God, to-day he has come back, and we pray earnestly that he shall remain. I do want you to look up a man named W——, who lives near you. He is now a Reservist. He left us a few months ago."

It so happened that this Reservist's mother came to my Sunday Afternoon Bible Class; she enabled me to see her son, and I then found he had learned to appreciate the good advice given him by Cox.

Private Cox, in the following letter, gives an account of his first address :—

Cox's First Speech

"You will no doubt be pleased to hear that, on the 2nd inst., I gave an address to no less than sixty-five

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persons. I chose my text from hymn, 'The Light of the World is Jesus.' The Haven Soldiers' Home at its last meeting asked the Worcesters to hold the ensuing service on the day mentioned, when I was asked to speak. I had no idea what to say; then I thought what we gain by that hymn. I am thinking, the next time I speak, it will be from the motto at the back of the photo of our band that I am sending you; 1 Pet. i. 5: 'Who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto Salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.' And after that, Eph. vi. 23, 24, which I have been studying: 'Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that

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love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.' That is all at present.

"Yours, etc."

Recruiting for the Master

A letter written from Verdala, November 26, 1906:—

"It is with deep regret I have to record the closing of the Gozo branch of the Soldiers' Christian Association, owing to our detachment joining the headquarters at Verdala; but as the trusty band of men are all together, I hope we shall continue as before. We are deprived of the privilege of a room in the barracks; but we are going to have one outside, as we have to recruit for the Master, and get men to His fold. How many blessings we

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should receive, if only, by joining together, we got more and more men to serve the Master! I go on to some of the ships, and get the names of brother Christians. But what can a poor private do? Why, he can do more than a preacher at times, God being his helper. I try to get men to like me; they sometimes say, 'There is something about you that goes home when you touch me on the shoulder.' 'Ah, brother,' I reply, 'it is the loving God that has sent His only Son that we might have our sins washed away.' I was speaking the other evening to a man belonging to the Marine Light Infantry, on board H.M.S. *Vulcan*. I asked him how he came to have a black eye. He replied, 'By serving God!' Before I

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had time to say more—for I was so surprised at his answer—he said, 'A mate was using some very obscene language, and I told him to chuck it, anyhow in my presence. Well, he chucked something at me pretty hard; but he soon had a warm reception from some of the others.' So I was glad to find there were good men there. Yes, I say, we must recruit and work for the Harvest."

Religious Intolerance

I had ordered to be posted to Cox the *British Congregationalist*, a well-known religious weekly, and also Miss Sandes' Soldiers' Home monthly, called *Forward*. He states in a letter the use he made of the "B. C.":

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after reading each weekly copy, he put several together and sent them in part form to one of the Soldiers' Homes in Malta. Then he relates a circumstance of much wider interest :—

"In the last number of the 'B. C.' I found a paragraph relating to the Rev. John McNeil and the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Malta. When McNeil held his mission in Malta a few months ago, the Roman Catholic Bishop made an appeal to the Governor and Commander-in-Chief to stop these religious meetings. The Governor gave way, and the meetings were stopped; but the Rev. John McNeil placed the matter before the English Government, and now I am very thankful that religious meetings can be held in any public building in the

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island of Malta. Many of us have been praying for a great revival in Malta. We shall be sure to get it, sooner or later; meanwhile, we must sow the seed, and then gather in the harvest. That is the duty of all Christians. We do want more workers. Could you send me a few little books, that would help them in the barrack-room to see the Light, instead of going so much to the canteen, injuring themselves and ruining their souls with this poison, commonly known as alcohol? If they would only drink from the Fountain of Pure Water, they would see their way clear."

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"NEARER, MY GOD, TO THEE"

A letter from Malta, December 5, 1906: —

"I am still 'at it,' as you remark, and am getting closer and closer to my Lord and Master. I must say, it is most marvellous the wonderful working power of God's Spirit. I am thankful for Miss Sandes' address; I shall write to her at the first opportunity. I am keeping a diary, as you suggest. I am so glad to hear of the success of the Adult School. I feel with you that we must help to get the men from the drink. What a lot of money is wasted in drink every year! How many are in our Unions; others slouching along the gutters! how many ruined homes through one

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half-pint, which leads on and on to a quart, and sooner or later to death! I have a verse which is my motto:—

'I am not every one,
But I am one;
I cannot do everything,
But what I can do,
By the Grace of God I will do.'

"And then there is another, 'Walk right, work right, speak right.' If we could only get every one to think over these simple words, and act up to them, what a difference it would make in this world! We should find all the boozers turn Christians. I hope before long we shall find it so.

"I am so glad W—— came to your class. I am writing to him, telling him what a friend we have in Jesus, and

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that He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

THE DRUNKARD'S "FAT HEAD"

The following is written on the note-paper of the Soldiers' Christian Association, Auxiliary of the Y.M.C.A., Malta Barracks. (It is headed with this neat extract from a letter received from the late Lord Roberts: "Most fully do I sympathize with the work that is being done, and I earnestly hope that its influence for good will continue to spread"):—

"December 30, 1906.

"DEAR SIR,

"I am very sorry I have not answered your last letter, as I have

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been very busy in my firing. We have been shifting about from place to place during the past month; but I am glad to say, I am still trying to do good for my Master. I am glad to tell you that two or three men, who were backsliders, have turned over a new leaf, and I heartily think they will become stronger and better Christians than ever. I shall see, by God's help, that they are. We must pray, and pray constantly, to get more into the fold.

"I am sorry to say that, in my Company alone, on Christmas Day, about fifty gallons of beer were consumed, which made me leave the barracks, and spend my time at the Soldiers' Home, which passed very pleasantly.

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"The next day, when the majority woke up, they had, of course, what we call a 'fat head.' Just imagine their feelings through that terrible curse, the drink! What a joy and blessing if there were no such thing as alcohol! It is the cause of so many men's downfall. The beer caused two court-martials: a sergeant and a corporal were reduced to the ranks. Isn't it sad to think of these two men, working for years to get the promotion, which they have just forfeited through their own stupid folly? It ought to make them decide to leave the poisonous stuff alone.

"I am glad to say I have been made branch secretary of the S.C.A. I shall do all I can, by the grace of God, to carry out the duties, and get

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a good number of Associates for the Master.

"I remain,
"Yours sincerely, in the Faith,
"JOSEPH H. COX."

GAMBLING, SUNDAY DESECRATION, ETC.

In the autumn and spring of 1907–8, I was away from England visiting the principal cities of Australasia. Before I left I sent Cox my addresses. He did not fail to write. The letters cheered me, and extracts were occasionally read to others as testimony of the blessing derived from correspondence. In one letter, Cox refers to the missionary meetings held at Malta: "These Maltese booksellers

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who have been converted, are issuing religious tracts, while the Roman Catholic Archbishop has been endeavouring to move the Pope of Rome to oppose these evangelistic missions, and to prevent their own people receiving the tracts."

When I reached England, in May, 1908, Cox sent me a long and interesting letter. He confirms the joyful experience I had referred to in my last letter from Australia—the delight of meeting those of one faith in all parts of the globe—the "Royal Priesthood, the Holy Nation," as St. Peter calls them. He relates with real delight the progress of the evangelical movement in Malta :—

"We are all praying for a great revival here in Malta. We have been

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praying for the Gospel to be published to the Maltese. A Bible colporteur is coming from Italy. During the last hundred years they have been without the Gospel. Just think of it! Now this colporteur will have the Gospel in their own language to distribute through the island, and they will be able to know what we know, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners (which means every one of us, not only one or two), and also to know how clearly Jesus tells us, 'I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.' We may be able to trifle with man's word, but we cannot trifle with God's Word.

"Betting and gambling are, I am sorry to say, increasing in some parts

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of Malta, fostered by the sporting press. Men read the news of the world, and neglect the news about God in that Book which is really a library of sixty-six books. Then, again, there is Sunday desecration, which goes farther than the private soldier and officers. Immediately after divine service, all kinds of games are played. But above all, there is much gambling and drinking. If you turn to the 103rd Psalm, you will read the words, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits,' and so on right through the psalm. But just look at the 17th verse, a verse that has helped me more than once: 'But the mercy of the

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Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children.' Now if you turn to 1 Cor. 13th chap., verses 1 and 2, you will see how necessary it is that we have love, and if we love God we must show it by loving our neighbour; and so I say, when we come across a brother in the dumps, we Christians must have a kind word for him, and be ready to lift him up, through God being in us.

"We are really having great times here in Malta, especially on board ship. 'To God be the glory, great things He hath done.' I don't praise anybody else, because it is God working through us. We could not do these things in our own power, for we

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are too weak, but God working through us makes us strong. 'All we like sheep have gone astray,' but God takes care of us, and watches over us.

"I remember a man going to the Haven, one of our Soldiers' Homes, for the first time. He thought he was going to a new public-house to have a drink. Some one invited him to come to the Haven. He asked what it was. 'Oh, come and see.' When he entered, he was rather taken aback; but he soon found friends who gave him a welcome. Now he says it's the best haven he has ever found. We prayed for him. Now I am pleased to say, he is doing some fine work at home, in one of the missions in Scotland. It is wonderful

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what prayer will do. We shall value your prayers to carry on with. Dr. Torrey says, 'Pray for great things, expect great things, work for great things, but above all, pray.'

"Perhaps it will interest you to know that I gave up smoking some five weeks ago, God be praised; and I trust, through God's grace, never to smoke again. My motto is, 'Aim high.' I should just like to give you one more text before closing this long letter. It is Rom. i. 9, 'For God is my witness, Whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;' and I quote No. 80 in 'Songs and Solos,' second verse :—

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'Before our Father's throne,
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims, are one,
Our comforts and our cares.'

"Yours sincerely, in Christ,

"JOSEPH H. COX."

KILLING BY KINDNESS

The next letter is from Bareilly, India:—

"DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIEND,

"I was so sorry to leave Malta just as the Gospel was laying hold of the Maltese, but I find it is required just as much in this part of India.

"The 4th Worc. Regiment left Malta on November 13, and arrived at Bombay on the 24th. A three days' journey up country in the train brought us to Bareilly on the 28th,

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when we marched to our bungalows. We passed a Soldiers' Institute, which I very soon became acquainted with. We have Soldiers' Christian Association meetings there. God is answering our prayers: we are adding to our numbers.

"As this is Christmas-time, we are very busy. In my spare time, I am making texts for the Institute. I find a Christian man in the Service is far happier than the unconverted. Right enough, those who chaff us are the first to come to us when in trouble. They see there is something in it. There is joy in realizing peace with God. I feel it must impress a man, when he has a kind word spoken to him, or a kind deed done for him; it is the best way to help a man to

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conversion. St. Paul says we are chosen vessels to the King of kings. We are here for a purpose, not only to live for God, but to win souls for Him. For that purpose Jesus Christ died to give life. Some of the men talk about the joy of a boozing excursion. Where does the joy come in—to wake up next morning with a 'fat head'? The unconverted seem to think they are happy; but they know nothing of that eternal joy. Every time I read my Bible, I seem to grasp more and more what Christ's love is for us, and it makes me more steadfast to go on. We are not all preachers, but we can do a little deed for the Master, and I tell my comrades, if it is done for Christ, it is as good as a sermon.

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'Get right with God,
Walk right with God,
Speak right with God,
Work right with God.'

"In concluding, I send you Num. vi. 24–26 :—

'The Lord bless thee, and keep thee;
The Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee;
The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.'

"Yours faithfully, in the Master's service."

Progress of the Temperance Movement

Cox rejoices in the growth of the temperance work in India :—

"I am glad to learn from your letter of the growth of the Adult School and Temperance work. It is

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not only gaining in civil life at home, but in the Army in India.

"Last week, the Rev. J. H. Bateson, Secretary of the Royal Army Temperance Association of India, visited our branch of the Association. We invited the battalion and garrison detachments to tea. After tea, Mr. Bateson gave an address. He read a telegram which was sent to him from the headquarters of the Association, giving the number of its members in the Indian Empire—33,369. We had another 100 to 120 to add to that of men who have promised since, by God's help, to abstain. The pledge signed is, to abstain from all intoxicating liquors except when administered medicinally, or for religious ordinances. There are two things

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a man can see on his card: (1) To seek God's help and strength in resisting temptation; and (2) Before breaking the pledge, to recollect his promise to return his pledge card to the address given. That is another little check.

"So, you see, the temperance movement is growing; and side by side the Christian work grows too. When we see Roman Catholics coming to the meetings almost every night, and find them serious about it, it makes one realize the true and inward meaning of religion. If I find any man in the Worcesters who has not a Bible, or a copy of the Book of Proverbs, I will let him have one of those small copies you have sent. I am so thankful for the 'B. C.,' and Miss Sandes'

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Magazine, *Forward*, not forgetting No. 80 Sankey's.

"Yours, in Christ's service,

"Lance-Corpl. JOSEPH H. COX."

PREVAILING PRAYER

The next letter reveals a change of employment, and also the opportunities and advantages which come to the diligent. Cox writes from—

"Brigade Staff Office,
"Garhwab Briges,
"Dehra Dum,
"July 22, 1909.

"DEAR SIR AND CHRISTIAN FRIEND,

"The papers you sent me are proving a good help to my Bible study. The lessons on the Acts of

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the Apostles have been especially interesting.

"I am at present away from my Battalion, employed in the Staff Office, where there are no British troops. I am with four others, each from different stations. After hours, the time seems to go so slowly. No Soldiers' Homes to go to; no S.C.A. weekly meetings or Christian Endeavour—only the native one in which Urdu is spoken—a language I don't understand; so you see the only thing I can do is, to study the weekly 'B. C.' paper and the monthly *Forward*. At times, when I have been very dull, I have looked up the 18th chapter of Judges, and the 23rd verse, 'What aileth thee?' And then I seem to gain in spirit, and say to myself, 'What can

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be against you when God is for you?'

"I send you a few words on spiritual progress, which I very often look up:—

Hear and understand. Mark xiii. 23.
Hear and receive. Mark iv. 20.
Hear and keep. Luke viii. 15 and 21.

"Then again, we have progress of God's work in the soul. If you look at Luke xv. verses 17, 18, 19, 20, you will find the following:—

"17th, conviction; 18th, confession; 19th, contrition; 20th, the full benefit of conversion. Oh! if all men realized the blessings of conversion, turning round and looking in God's Word, why, our churches would have to be extended, our prisons would have to be diminished,

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and the police force would not be wanted. What is failing? The fact of men not drawing nearer to God. If we draw near to God, He draws near to us. The reason, I think, why they do not have their prayers answered is, because they do not pray earnestly. They have the idea that prayers might be answered immediately; but it is not so; God answers prayer in His own good time. The blessings of prayer come to those who in faith wait. I say to my comrades again and again, 'Seek ye the Lord while you have the chance, for to-morrow the end may come, when all opportunities will be past.'"

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Advice to Young Recruits

In one of my letters, I had informed him that, as a magistrate, I often had to swear in young Army recruits, and that I usually gave them a small copy of the Book of Proverbs, accompanied by a message and a warning. Cox had before urged me to tell every recruit that the soldier had two great snares: drink, and evil women; and he followed this request with the expression of a fervent wish that all who come to me for enlistment might be soldiers of the King of kings.

The Soldier and the Civilian

The next letter shows great temperance progress, and the benefits that

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accrue from it; and also the influence which an earnest secretary can exercise. It is dated—

"February 24, 1910.

"I am glad we have now finished our manœuvres. During the training, I can assure you it was very severe. We only had about a dozen fall out through sickness, out of a brigade of 5000. Why? Because there was no liquor allowed to the troops, and on the line of march they were only allowed one pint of beer a day. I can honestly say that this year's manœuvres have been the most sober I have ever seen. During the last two years, the Army Temperance Association has grown enormously. I have seen the time, and not long

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ago, when the membership in my Battalion was only 72, including juveniles; but at the end of January this year, our membership was 215. That is cheerful. I am looking forward to the time when we shall see the public-houses of England closed, and our temperance halls and clubs not be large enough to hold us. If a man wants to keep steady, he must give up drinking; and if he wants to avoid drinking, he must be a total abstainer; and to keep an abstainer, he must join one of our temperance societies, where he can get away from the temptation to drink. Then the religious societies offer a man a place to go to. I know many men, who have become earnest workers for God, who came first to

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the Christian meeting because they dreaded the temptation of the canteen.

"There is a vast amount of difference between life in the service and civilian life. A civilian has many more opportunities for studying God's Word. He need not be interrupted; but as soon as a soldier gets a book out of his box to study, a sergeant, or some other N.C.O., comes up, and wants him for some fatigue or other duty. We never know from one moment what we are on for, or what we are about to do, so we have to make good use of what time we have.

"Perhaps you wonder why I remain a private. Well, when I joined the Royal Army Temperance Association, I did not believe in visiting the canteen. I was appointed

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unpaid Lance-Corporal, and had to pay to the Corporal's mess, which adjoins the canteen; and as I never used the place, I did not see why I should pay for some one else who did; and as I could not back out, I gave up the stripe, and remained a private. I am able to help a comrade who is weaker, and to seek advice from those stronger than myself. I am always glad of the opportunity of seeking advice from the chaplain. What God calls us to do, He will fit us for. If we want a thing, we must pray for it. This is one of my favourite verses:—

'Don't stop praying, for God is nigh;
Don't stop praying, He'll hear your cry;
Don't stop praying, for God is true;
Don't stop praying, He'll answer you.'

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"Now, in closing, I will leave you with a verse in Psalm cxxvi. 3: 'The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.' I find this precious.

"Yours faithfully,
"JOSEPH HENRY COX."

THE CHRISTIAN IN THE BARRACK ROOM

Prospects of seeing England once again, and cheer at the success and progress of temperance in the Army, characterize the next letter, written from—

"Bareilly,
"October 26, 1910.

"The trooping season starts, for India, in September, and finishes in April. I am looking forward to getting to England for Christmas.

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"On Tuesday of this week, we had a lady visitor, Miss Mary A. Lockhead (o the Y.W.C.A., of Scotland), who is travelling in India for the temperance cause. She gave an address to a great crowd, in the hall of the Soldiers' Institute. Strange to relate, there were only four persons in the canteen that evening, an incident never before known; so you see temperance is advancing. I hope to live to see Prohibition or Local Option. The advance in America is most wonderful; there are as many people enjoying Prohibition in the U.S. as we have in the British Isles—45 millions.

"I was glad to see your letter in the 'B. C.,' giving an account of your visit to Newfoundland, and

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of the progress of temperance there. I get some rich blessings from Dr. Jowett's sermons in the 'B. C.' When I have read them, I pass them on to the Wesleyan chaplain; so you see your gift helps others. The Golden Text this week is Exod. x. 11: 'Go now, ye that are men, and serve the Lord.' That is splendid for the men in the Army to carry out. It is good to be a soldier serving King and Country, but better still when we are all soldiers of Christ, and have our armour on. We find we are more than conquerors through Him Who died for us, that we might have life. If men would only realize what life in God means!

"Look at James iv. 8 and 10: 'Draw nigh to God, and He will

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draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. . . . Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up.'

"I very often put these verses straight home to some unconverted comrade. It is very frequently said that men cannot lead a Christian life in the barrack room; but I am glad to say, I ever strive to practise what I preach, and let them see it is just as easy to live a Christian life in the barrack room, as it is in the Soldiers' Home. I have just now, in the middle of writing this letter, been asked by the corporal if I was seeking inspiration by opening my Bible. I replied that I was seeking God's

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guidance. The corporal then went away, and left me in peace.

"We are still growing in our S.C.A., and can send satisfactory reports to headquarters. Every night, I thank God for keeping me during the day. He has done so, and has kept me in health and strength ever since I joined. We know not the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh, but oh! how necessary it is to be prepared, and to walk in the Light!

"I hope to see you before Christmas."

Home Coming

When the 4th Worcesters landed at Southampton, I received a telegram that my soldier-correspondent had arrived. It was not long before he

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came to see me, and to consult me about work. His testimonials were all most excellent. I recommended him to seek work on the Great Western Railway. What a blessing a good and clear record must be to a man who, after eight years in the Army, seeks civil employment!

Soon after this, I heard from him that he had obtained a situation at Cardiff with the Great Western Railway, and would take up his duties immediately. He hoped to write and report progress, as he had done during the previous seven years. His gratitude, for help rendered by letters and books, and for encouragement in the study of the Word, repaid me a thousand-fold for any little effort expended.

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At Ebbw Vale, where he was appointed, he at once identified himself with the Temperance and Early Morning School work. His letters always manifested the same confidence and faith in the call to service which he had shown in the Army.

He was ever diligent, ever pressing the foe. He was able to expose, to some ministers of the Free Churches, a system of gambling called "Football Sweeps," which was then specially rampant in the public-houses. The authorities were moved to action, and the evil was suppressed. As usual, he forwarded, in the following extract, a Scriptural reference, in justification of his efforts: "'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our

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sufficiency is of God.' 2 Cor. iii. 5. To believe this, is to discover the secret of a strong and restful Christian life. We may be weak, as indeed we are, even at our strongest; but God is Almighty, and He is on our side. We may be called upon to suffer hardships, but His grace will be sufficient for us to go on day by day doing His will. We have been sent into this world for a purpose, and that purpose has yet to be fulfilled." With this letter, he forwarded his photograph.

Indifference to Religion

The last letter before the one dated February 4, 1914 (in which he describes his early history), is burdened with the sense of "indifference" to

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religion, and the unprofitable lives lived, by many around him :—

"December 13, 1912.

"I received your kind and welcome letter. It seemed to put new life into me.

"It is sad to see men, who get much better wages than I do, much worse off through drinking and gambling. They prefer going to the public-houses and wasting their money, instead of putting it on their backs, or spending it in their homes, or saving it for bad times. Oh! how I think of the Prodigal, who went and spent all! I am constantly telling my comrades that 'Now is the accepted time, Now is the day of Salvation.' But still they linger on, not knowing when they

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may be called into eternity. How I should like to see Prohibition in the United Kingdom; then we should not require half our workhouses and prisons. More than half the crimes are actually caused by drink; and drink, indirectly, has to do with much of the other half.

"I am still on the railway, getting 20*s*. per week. Out of that I have to pay various clubs, which brings it to 18*s*. 4*d*. per week; but had it not been for the grace of God working in me, I feel sure that I should have been lost long ago, as so many of my comrades have tried their uttermost to lead me astray; but God has proved greater than the Devil, and has kept me under the shadow of His wing, and has told me many times, 'I will never

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leave thee, nor forsake thee.' In Luke xi. 13, we read that our Heavenly Father 'Gives the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.' Oh! how I am constantly asking God to give the Holy Spirit to those that are blind in sin, that He may open their blind eyes, so that they may see what He has done for me and thousands of others!

"We have an Early Morning (School) Class here, though we are not strong. We have a schoolmaster as president. We talk over God's Word, and how God helps us in our daily work. Your book, *Mending Men*, will be a great blessing to many working men, I feel sure.

"Yours, in Christ's keeping,

"JOSEPH H. COX.

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"P.S.—See 1 Cor. xv. 57: 'But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'"

ROLL OF HONOUR

This last letter from Cox is dated nine days before he was killed in action:—

"In the Trenches,
"October 19th, 1914.

"DEAR SIR,

"It is a pleasure to me to let you have a line, after such a length of time without one. Of course, I was not able to write to you when you went on your tour some months ago, and you see that since then I have been mobilized and am on active service, as you will see by the address.

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It was only through my landlady telling me that you had been enquiring about me, that I knew you had returned. Since I have been in this country, we have had some very hard times, what with marching and fighting, and being in the trenches. We have lost a lot of men, and I have seen houses burnt down, and horses and men lying dead against the side of the road, when we have been marching from place to place. The first night that I was present at the Battle of the Aisne, my Battalion lost a lot of men; but the Germans have lost more, and we are still on the winning side, and still driving the enemy backwards. Field-Marshal Sir J. D. French has just sent us a letter to the effect that the Battle of the

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Aisne (which has lasted . . . . .), is the biggest battle in the world that history has known . . . . . , and that those who have partaken in the same will have fresh laurels placed on their standards. Although we have been under such great difficulties, I am pleased to state that we have still been able to keep the banner flying high in God's work, having occasionally held meetings with the men, and offered up our praise to God for all His mercies; and so have endured hardships as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

"I have managed to get this little bit of note-paper sent to me, as we cannot get any from where we are. I have not had my clothes off for the last six weeks, and my boots have not been off many times either, so

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you can see a few of the hardships we have to endure; but it is all for King and Country, and more so, it is the work of the Unseen, and every day I can thank Him that it is a day nearer home, and a day nearer Heaven.

"I have just had a letter from home, stating that my Dad and Mother are very ill, and it comes very hard to me to think that I cannot be near them. I don't know whether they are getting anything from the Prince of Wales' Fund or not, as they are in straitened circumstances, and there is only a sister, who is much younger than myself, now to help them. I should feel greatly obliged to you, if you could find out for me whether they are getting anything from the Fund

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or not. Please let me know, as I shall feel a little more at rest, although we must remember that 'All things work together for good to them that love God;' if it is His will that I shall be called away without seeing them again, then I can safely say that 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, and kept the faith;' and on the other hand, if I am spared to return, I hope to see them alive. I wish you to report the work to the Early Morning Adult School, and to say that, although on active service, we can still do our little bit for Him Who has done so much for us.

"I am writing these few lines under a heavy fire, as shells are whizzing over our heads every minute, and

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one does not know but that they may burst over us or in our midst. The other day, while our Battalion were walking along a road under cover, a German shell burst, and part of it caught a comrade on the head, and killed him before he could state whether he had found the Saviour or not, which I hope he had. Then again, a few days later, while in a village taking cover, another chum of mine (who joined the S.C.A. that I was so instrumental in forming while in the Service), got hit in the foot by a shrapnel shell, which was very bad. He exclaimed, 'Never mind, thank God, I still have one foot left, and there is hope of the other being saved,' which I hope will be. Then again, I myself am quite well, although,

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while advancing into the enemy's lines, a maxim was fired on me; but I was able to get clear behind a house, and there take shelter, and finally I got back to my Company.

"I could still go on relating my experiences, but have not time, as I am just about to dig another trench; so will close now with 1 Pet. i. 5: 'Kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.'

"Hoping to hear from you at an early date, after you get this,

"Yours faithfully,

"JOSEPH H. COX."

Joseph Cox was but a humble soldier of the rank and file. He gave his life bravely for King and Country, and died in action fighting for a

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righteous cause. His grave is in the neighbourhood of Neuve Chapelle, where his body rests with many more of his brave compatriots, who also sacrificed their lives for truth and honour, and to uphold the priceless heritage of national freedom.

Joseph Cox had discovered the enrichment of the abundant life; he had seen the vision of a kingdom which is not bounded by our years on earth, but is everlasting; a dominion which endures throughout all generations. He, like all who really possess that spiritual treasure, hungered for others to possess it too.

Experience had taught him that the great usurper of the fuller life—the foe whose dire influence obscures spiritual perception and hinders the

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growth of the soul—is alcohol. His frequent denunciations of the folly of drinking, and his conviction that prohibition is a national duty, show how deeply he had been impressed by the disastrous effects of drink among his fellow-workers.

This terrible war has set the nations thinking. Many in this country, who considered Mr. Gladstone's famous statement, "that the ravages of drink are greater than those of war, pestilence, and famine," to be an exaggeration, have come round to believe in its truth. The surest remedy for every one who reads this memoir is, to follow Joseph Cox's example:

"TOUCH NOT, TASTE NOT, HANDLE NOT."

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